

REMARKS

1. In response to the Office Action mailed October 19, 2006, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. Claims 45-54, 56-59, 68, 69, 76-88 and 92-101 were last presented in this application. In the outstanding Office Action, claims 45, 48, 68, 69 and 86 were rejected, claims 46, 47, 49-54, 56-59, 87, 88 and 92-94 were objected to, and claims 76-85 and 95-101 were allowed. By the foregoing Amendments, claims 45 and 86 have been amended, claims 46 and 87 have been cancelled, and no claims have been added. Thus, upon entry of this paper, claims 45, 47-54, 56-59, 68, 69, 76-86, 88 and 92-101 will be pending in this application. Of these 37 claims, five (5) claims (claim 45, 76, 86, 95 and 99) are independent. These Amendments are believed not to introduce new matter and their entry is respectfully requested.

Art of Record

2. Applicant acknowledges receipt of form PTO-892 identifying additional reference(s) made of record by the Examiner.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 76-85 and 95-98 are allowable and that claims 46, 47, 49-66, 87, 88, 89 and 91-94 would be allowable if combined with their respective base and intervening claims.

Examiner Interview

4. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended to the undersigned representative in the telephonic interview conducted on January 9, 2006. In the Interview, the Examiner and undersigned agreed to amendments which will place the application in condition for allowance. Such amendments are addressed below.

Claim Rejections

5. Independent claim 45 and dependent claims 48, 68, 69 and 86 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by European Patent No. 0450968 to Jones (hereinafter, "Jones"). In accordance with the Examiner's confirmation regarding the

objection to claims 46 and 86, by the foregoing Amendments, claim 45 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 46 thereby placing claim 45 in condition for allowance, and claim 86 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 87 thereby placing claim 86 in condition for allowance. Claims 46 and 87 have been cancelled. Thus, without addressing the propriety of the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action, Applicants respectfully assert that the above amendments overcome such rejections to place the application in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

6. The dependent claims incorporate all of the subject matter of their respective independent claims and add additional subject matter which makes them *a fortiori* independently patentable over the art of record. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the outstanding rejections of the dependent claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

7. In view of the foregoing, this application should be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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